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DIAMOND

5 AB DE VILLIERS RECORDS THAT MIGHT NEVER BE BROKEN

INDIA'S PREDICTED T20I TEAM UNDER COACH RAHUL DRAVID

IS HARDIK PANDYA THE NEW VINOD KAMBLI?

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

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Cricket today

Hardik Pandya's breaking into the white-ball squads of the Indian cricket team in 2016 was a new light in a search for a proper all-rounder. Not only Pandya could smash the ball out of the park, but his efforts with bowling and fielding meant he was here to stay for a long time. Some even likened Pandya to former Indian skipper Kapil Dev. Pandya not only flourished in Team India's scene, but was a consistent force in the Indian Premier League for Mumbai Indians. That helped him as well in terms of shaping his game. Pandya found success with MI and was a consistent force. The hard-hitting all-rounder made it to India's Test side in 2017 and earned a name for himself often coming on as the fourth pacer overseas. He was a constant feature for the side until 2018. However of late, Pandya has been struggling with issues on and off the field. A shoulder injury saw him miss a lot of cricket for India in recent times and he has also lost his ability to bowl at the moment and there's no clear timeline as to when he will resume his services with the ball. With him not bowling, it impacted MI in the IPL 2021 season and Team India as well in the ICC T20 World Cup 2021. Post the T20 World Cup, Pandya was didn't feature in the recently concluded T20I series against New Zealand at home. Reports have also come in that he is well short of the fitness standards required and could miss the upcoming series against South Africa next month. He is set to spend time at the NCA and be part of a rehab to nurse his shoulder. Looking at Pandya's injury woes and recent poor performances, it's safe to say that he could take a while to be the player he really is. To force his way back into the side could also be a long journey. This also brings us to the issues happening off the field. Pandya is rash and careless. Bangladesh cricket fans have protested the Pakistan cricket team's decision to plant its national flag at the Mirpur ground, where they were practicing ahead of the three-match T20I series. The move by the Pakistan team led to a major controversy. However, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has clarified that they started planting the national flag during practice sessions during the last two months. Pakistan coach Saqlain Mushtaq had started the same to boost the team's morale. Bangladesh fans have created uproar in the past as well, needlessly. Enjoy the action-packed edition of Cricket Today...

He is set to spend time at the NCA and be part of a rehab to nurse his shoulder.

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WHAT'S HOT & NOT

DIMUTH KARUNARATNE

Sri Lanka captain Dimuth Karunaratne, who scored 147 and 83, was named player of the match in the first Test against Windies. Sri Lanka dismissed the West Indies for 160 in a crushing 187-run victory in the first cricket Test.

TIM PAINE

Tim Paine is set to miss the first Ashes test and is taking an indefinite mental health break from the game. The news comes a week after Paine tearfully quit as captain after revelations of a scandal involving the sending of inappropriate texts to a female co-worker in 2017.

PAT CUMMINS

Pat Cummins has been named the first fast bowler to captain Australia's test cricket team on a fulltime basis. The last fast bowler to lead Australia at test level was Ray Lindwall for a single match in 1956, and only as a stand-in.

CHETESHWAR PUJARA

Cheteshwar Pujara was caught behind off Tim Southee in a repeat of the batsman's dismissals against Australia and England — edging outside off stump. Pujara scored 26 and India was 106-3.

STEVE SMITH

He returns from leadership wilderness to become the team's vice captain. Smith was fired from the captaincy after the ball-tampering scandal in South Africa in 2018. As well as losing the captaincy, he was banned from any leadership roles for two years.

AJINKYA RAHANE

He added 39 runs for the fourth wicket with Iyer when Jamieson returned and castled Rahane on 35 for his third wicket. Ajinkya Rahane was slammed by fans and former cricketers for throwing away his wicket in the first innings against New Zealand.

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HALAL MEAT CONTROVERSY

A fresh controversy surrounding Team India started after a report by a leading news channel claimed that players have been instructed to avoid pork and beef. The report further added that only halal meat would be served to the cricketers. The governing body of the Indian cricket, BCCI, was slammed by the fans for issuing new directives. However, BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal has rubbished all such reports. Dhumal went on to add the board doesn't have any role in deciding the choices of the players. "This (diet plan) has never been discussed and will not be enforced. I don't know when this decision was taken or if it was. As far as I know, we never issued any guidelines related to diet plans. As far as food habits are concerned, it is the individual choice of players, BCCI has no role in it," said Dhumal as quoted by India Today.

SHOCKING ALLEGATIONS OF RACISM

England cricket is under the scanner due to allegations of racism by several players. Former Yorkshire cricketer Azeem Rafiq revealed many shocking experiences of racist comments at the club. After his episode, many other cricketers have come forward to narrate their stories. Jahid Ahmed, who played for Essex, recalled how he was targeted due to his religion and accent. He was also called a terrorist by some of his teammates. Jahid became the third former Essex player after Zoheb Sharif and Maurice Chambers to reveal his story. "I really wanted to fit in but there were times when pretty much everyone in the dressing room joined in the laughter at my expense. It was basically, 'You're a Muslim, you're a terrorist."

SEXTING SCANDAL

David Warner's wife Candice has opened up about Tim Paine's sexting scandal, which has led to his stepping down from the post of Test captain. She reckoned Cricket Australia (CA) is having double standards, as they are conveying a message that it is not right for a captain to be involved in such activities but it is perfectly fine for a player to carry on with such acts. "They're (CA) basically saying that it's not okay for an Australian cricket captain to send these messages, but it's okay for an Australian player," Candice told 2GB radio. "As a wife of an Australian player, that is slightly concerning and it does make me worry." Paine is available as a player for the Ashes. Cricket Australia hasn't made any official announcement on team's new Test captain.

KING OF T20IS

Pakistan's T20I captain Babar Azam continues to lead the rankings despite his poor performance against Bangladesh. He is followed by Dawid Malan and Aiden Markram and Mohammad Rizwan in the 3rd, 4th and 5th respectively. Virat Kohli has dropped out of the top 10 of the ICC T20I rankings for batters after 18 months. Kohli, who was rested for the 3-match T20I series against New Zealand, has lost three places to be at No.11 in the latest rankings. While KL Rahul has moved to 5th spot, Rohit Sharma is at the 13th spot in the newly released list. Rohit was unstoppable against the visiting New Zealand team and bagged the Player of the Series for leading the batting charts.

BLESSED WITH BABY GIRL

Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Nupur have been blessed with a baby girl. Nupur gave birth to their first kid at a private hospital in Delhi. The duo got married on November 23, 2017. Fans and teammates took to Twitter to congratulate the couple. Bhuvneshwar's family endured a tough time this year due to the demise of his father. Bhuvneshwar's mother Indresh and sister Rekha are present with his wife. Meanwhile, Bhuvneshwar, who failed to perform in the ICC T20 World Cup, was phenomenal in the recently concluded T20I series against New Zealand. He took three wickets in as many games at an economy rate of 7.5. Bhuvneshwar's next international assignment would be the ODI and T20I series in South Africa.

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PROUD MOMENT

Melbourne Renegades star performer and India's T20I captain Harmanpreet Kaur has bagged the Player of the Tournament for the 2021 season of the Women's Big Bash League. She has scored 399 runs and added 15 wickets to her tally in the ongoing tournament. She is leading the both the batting and bowling tallies for the Melbourne Renegades. Earlier, she represented Sydney Thunder. However, Kaur is participating in the league after a gap of two years. Harmanpreet is the first Indian player to win the award. Other than Kaur, Smriti Mandhana (377 runs) and Jemimah Rodrigues (317 runs) have also performed well in the tournament.

FEATURE

INDIA'S PREDICTED T20I TEAM UNDER COACH RAHUL DRAVID

Captain and vice-captain Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul will be the preferred choice to open whenever they are available. They are arguably the best all-format open - ing pair in world cricket at the moment...

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BY RENIN WILBEN

Team India's new head coach Rahul Dravid has admitted that workload management will be an extremely important aspect of his job as the team's guiding light. While he did not directly admit that India will have different teams for different formats, he did concede that there are individuals who play only in certain formats.

Dravid stressed that players' mental health needs to be looked at, and the long-term future of cricketers cannot be neglected. In the wake of the Indian coach's statement on workload management, we look at players who are likely to be a part of the Indian team in the T20 format consistently.

TOP-ORDER: ROHIT SHARMA, KL RAHUL, RUTURAJ GAIKWAD, PRITHVI SHAW

Captain and vice-captain Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul will be the preferred choice to open whenever they are available. They are arguably the best all-format opening pair in world cricket at the moment. When they are on rest, India can give opportunities to Ruturaj Gaikwad and Prithvi Shaw. Both have been in stellar form in the IPL, and Shaw has some international experience, although his career at the top level has been a mixed bag. Devdutt Padikkal is waiting in the wings as well. India are blessed in the top-order department.

MIDDLE-ORDER: VIRAT KOHLI, SURYAKUMAR YADAV, ISHAN KISHAN, RISHABH PANT, SHREYAS IYER

Apart from Virat Kohli, who should make a comeback soon, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan have made very good starts to their T20 career, exceptional in the case of SKY. Although 31, Yadav can still go on and play for a few more years. Kishan is young and exuberant talent, and India can look to fit him in the middle-order. Wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant is definitely in the scheme of things and should be a long-term prospect for India. Shreyas Iyer has shown in his short career that he can do the match-winning act if given a defined role. India need to find more middle-order options, though.

ALL-ROUNDERS: RAVINDRA JADEJA, VENKATESH IYER, HARDIK PANDYA, SHARDUL THAKUR

This is one area India are poor with. Apart from Ravindra Jadeja, they are struggling to find a decent all-rounder. Hardik Pandya played as an all-rounder in the T20 World Cup 2021 but hardly bowled. It was a mystery of sorts and a needless distraction amid a mega event. Not surprisingly, Pandya was dropped for the New Zealand series. Having said that, his replacement Venkatesh Iyer did not bowl in the first two matches of the series against New Zealand. India uti-

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lized their five main bowlers in both the games, but they must test out the sixth bowling option. They are going to need it sooner rather than later.

Shardul Thakur should also be in the scheme of things as an all-rounder in the T20 format. The 30-year-old was brilliant with both and ball during the Test series in England, and he followed it up with some fantastic performances in the second half of IPL 2021. He did not have a lot to do in the T20 World Cup, but he can win games for India, especially with the ball.

BOWLERS: JASPRIT BUMRAH, DEEPAK CHAHAR, HARSHAL PATEL, MOHAMMED SIRAJ, YUZVENDRA CHAHAL, RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN, AXAR PATEL

India have decent options in both the pace bowling and spin department. They should have Jasprit Bumrah back in the mix soon to lead the pace bowling department. Mohammed Shami and Bhuvneshwar Kumar could fall out of favor. Mohammed Siraj has impacted his short career, while Harshal Patel has also made an impressive debut. Deepak Chahar is another medium-pacer who has proved that he has match-winning skills.

Ravichandran Ashwin, Axar Patel, and Yuzvendra Chahal seem to be the main spin bowling options in the T20 department. Varun Chakravarthy looked out of place in the T20 World Cup, while Rahul Chahar still seems raw. Ashwin has rediscovered his mojo while Chahal looks on the upswing again. Axar has been doing a steady job in the opportunities he has been provided with.■

5 AB DE VILLIERS RECORDS THAT MIGHT NEVER BE BROKEN

De Villiers holds the record for having smashed the fastest 50, 100 and 150 in one-day cricket. Incredibly, he achieved all three feats in the same year and two of them in the same match. The South African giant reached his fifty off 16 balls in the second ODI of the 2015 series against West Indies...

BY RENIN WILBEN

South African legend AB de Villiers recently stunned fans when he announced that he would be retiring from all forms of cricket. De Villiers, who had retired from international cricket in 2018, continued playing in franchise T20 leagues and was one of the key members of the IPL franchise Royal Challengers Bangalore for many years. He ended his T20 career with 9424 runs in 340 matches at a strike rate of 150.13 with four hundreds and 69 fifties. In the IPL, he amassed 5162 runs in 184 matches at a strike rate of 151.68. In the wake of his complete retirement from cricket, we look at some of his amazing records that wmight never be broken.

1. FASTEST 50, 100 AND 150 IN ODIS

De Villiers holds the record for having smashed the fastest 50, 100 and 150 in one-day cricket. Incredibly, he achieved all three feats in the same year and two of them in the same match. The South African giant reached his fifty off 16 balls in the second ODI of the 2015 series against West Indies in Johannesburg. He thus went past Sanath Jayasuriya's record of having scored a fifty in 17 balls. In the same match, De Villiers went on to complete a century in only 31 balls. By doing so, he broke the record held by Corey Anderson, who had slammed a 36-ball hundred in 2014. De Villiers ended up scoring 149 in only 44 balls, clobbering nine fours and 16 sixes.

The former South African cricketer also hit the fastest 150 off only 64 balls against West Indies later in the

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year. This innings was even more special as it was registered during the 2015 World Cup encounter in Sydney. De Villiers ended up unbeaten on 162 off 66, smacking 17 fours and eight sixes.

2. HIGHEST STRIKE RATE IN AN INNINGS BY A CENTURION IN ODIS

De Villiers holds the record for the highest strike rate in an innings by a centurion in ODIs. He achieved this spectacular feat during his 44-ball 149 in the one-dayer against West Indies. ABD ended his innings with a staggering strike rate of 338.63. He also has the best strike rate for a 150+ knock in ODIs. During his innings of 162 not out against West Indies in the 2015 World Cup, he finished with a strike rate of 245.45.

3. ONLY BATTER AVERAGING OVER 50 WITH A STRIKE RATE OF 100-PLUS IN ODIS (MINIMUM 2000 RUNS)

De Villiers holds a rare record in ODIs. Among batters with more than 2000 runs, he is the only one with a strike rate of 100-plus and an average of 50-plus. Mr 360 plundered 9577 runs in 228 one-dayers at a strike rate of 101.09 and an average of 53.50. Also, De Villiers and Kohli are the only batters to average more than 50 in both Tests and ODI cricket (minimum 2,000 runs). De Villiers averaged 50.66 in Tests, while Kohli has an average of 51.08 in Tests and 59.07 in ODI cricket.

4. MOST INNINGS BEFORE FIRST TEST DUCK – 78

Apart from being a limited-overs legend, De Villiers was a great batter in the Test format as well. He holds the record for having played the most innings before being dismissed for a duck. He played 78 innings before being dismissed without scoring against Bangladesh in 2008-09 at Centurion. De Villiers ended his Test career with 8765 runs in 114 matches at an average of 50.66 with 22 hundreds.

5. TOP TWO IPL PARTNERSHIPS

De Villiers featured in the top two partnerships in the history of the IPL, both times with Virat Kohli. He added 229 alongside the RCB skipper in IPL 2016 versus Gujarat Lions and 215 against Mumbai Indians in 2015. ABD was unbeaten on 129 off 52 against the Lions and slammed 133 not out off 59 against MI.■

5 TIMES BANGLADESH FANS CREATED NEEDLESS CONTROVERSIES

Ahead of the Asia Cup 2016 final between India and Bangladesh, an image went viral on social media in which Bangladesh bowler Taskin Ahmed is seen holding the head of former India captain MS Dhoni...

BY RENIN WILBEN

Bangladesh cricket fans have protested the Pakistan cricket team's decision to plant its national flag at the Mirpur ground, where they were practicing ahead of the three-match T20I series. The move by the Pakistan team led to a major controversy. However, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has clarified that they started planting the national flag during practice sessions during the last two months. Pakistan coach Saqlain Mushtaq had started the same to boost the team's morale. Bangladesh fans have created uproar in the past as well, needlessly. In the wake of their latest controversy, we look back at five previous instances when Bangladesh fans made news for the wrong reasons.

PHOTOSHOPPED IMAGE OF TASKIN AHMED HOLDING MS DHONI'S HEAD

Ahead of the Asia Cup 2016 final between India and Bangladesh, an image went viral on social media in which Bangladesh bowler Taskin Ahmed is seen holding the head of former India captain MS Dhoni. The picture, reportedly created by a Bangladesh fan, led to a massive backlash on social media as many questioned the sportsmanship spirit of Bangladesh fans. India went on to defeat Bangladesh by eight wickets in the 2016 Asia Cup final. Shikhar Dhawan was named man of the match for his 44-ball 60 as India chased a target of 121 with ease.

INDIAN CRICKET FAN SUDHIR GAUTAM ATTACKED BY BANGLADESH SUPPORTERS

Celebrated Indian cricket fan Sudhir Gautam claimed that Bangladeshi supporters attacked him in Dhaka after India's defeat in a one-day international in 2015. Gautam told a Hindi news channel that a mob assaulted him after the second ODI against Bangladesh. "When I cleared out the stadium, individuals mobbed me and began grabbing the Tricolor, breaking the handle of the fan." He also added that he was pelted by stones while his auto-rickshaw was also attacked. Security officials came to his rescue as the mob chased kept chasing him.

BANGLADESH FANS TROLLED FOR CALLING SCOTLAND' UNPROFESSIONAL'

Bangladesh fans found themselves at the centre of another controversy when they attacked Scotland fans and called them 'unprofessional' after they interrupted Bangladesh's captain's post-match conference. Bangladesh were stunned by Scotland in Round 1 of the T20 World Cup 2021. As Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah was analyzing the defeat at the conference, Scotland fans erupted and made a huge noise, forcing the cricketer to hold his thought a bit. Mahmudullah kept his calm and answered queries once the noise level went down. However, Bangladesh fans did not stop and kept attacking Scotland on social media, hitting out at them. They were, in turn, trolled for lashing out at Scotland.

WEST INDIES BUS STONED

Bangladesh fans stooped to a new low when some unruly elements threw stones at West Indies' bus after the Windies hammered Bangladesh in the 2011 World Cup match. West Indies bundled out Bangladesh for a paltry 58 and then chased down the target with nine wickets in hand. As the West Indian team sat in the bus to return to the hotel after the match, fans threw stones, hitting the window and breaking the glass. West Indies batter Chris Gayle tweeted from the bus: "Bangladesh stoning our bus!!! Freaking glass Break!!! This is crap, can't believe ... what next bullets!!!"

BRENDON MCCULLUM TROLLED AFTER INACCURATE PREDICTION

Brendon McCullum made some interesting predictions ahead of the 2019 World Cup based on his views of teams, which were harmless in nature. McCullum picked England, India, Australia, and New Zealand as the top four sides. His predictions came correct, but he had stated that Bangladesh would lose all games except the one against Sri Lanka. After Bangladesh went on to upset South Africa, fans of the Banga Tigers hit out at McCullum. There were several insulting memes created on him. The former Kiwi skipper praised Bangladesh for their win over Proteas.

TOP 7 KNOCKS OF AB DE VILLIERS IN FRANCHISE CRICKET

In the 46th match of IPL 2015 between RCB and Mumbai Indians (MI) in Mumbai, De Villiers was in incredible form...

BY RENIN WILBEN

South Africa's batting genius AB de Villiers announced his retirement from all forms of cricket on Friday. The legendary batter had already retired from international cricket a few years back but continued to display his talent in franchise cricket. He was a massive hit in the Indian Premier League (IPL) and one of the biggest stars in the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) batting line-up. In a stunning T20 career, he smashed 9424 runs in 340 matches at an excellent strike rate of 150.13 with four hundreds. In the wake of his decision to quit the sport, we look back at ABD's standout knocks in franchise cricket.

1.133 NOT OUT VS MUMBAI INDIANS – IPL 2015

In the 46th match of IPL 2015 between RCB and Mumbai Indians (MI) in Mumbai, De Villiers was in incredible form. He faced only 59 balls yet ended up with 133* against his name, spanking 19 fours and four sixes, scoring at a strike rate of 225.42. De Villiers and skipper Virat Kohli (82* off 50) featured in an unbroken second-wicket stand of 215 as the South African, in particular, was unstoppable. The MI bowlers had utterly forgettable figures. Mitchell McClenaghan went for 40 in his four, Jasprit Bumrah was hammered for 52 while Hardik Pandya gave away 51 in only three overs. MI put up a decent performance in the chase but still ended up losing by 39 runs.

2. 105 NOT OUT VS CHENNAI SUPER KINGS – IPL 2009

De Villiers scored a stunning hundred, his first in the IPL, for Delhi Daredevils against Chennai Super Kings in the ninth match of the 2009 edition in Durban. DD batted first in the game and ABD blasted a splendid 105 off only 54 balls, hitting five fours and six sixes. He was sedated during the first half of the innings but shifted gears after being dropped by fellow South African Albie Morkel, racing from 79 to 100 in five balls. Tillakaratne Dilshan also contributed 50 in 27 as DD posted 189 for 5. CSK went hard in the chase but DD emerged victorious by nine runs.

3. 89 NOT OUT VS SUNRISERS HYDERABAD – IPL 2014

The beauty of the IPL is that it pits greats of the same team against each other. SRH seemed to be in control defending a target of 156. With two overs left, RCB needed 28 to win in match number 24 of IPL 2014 in Bengaluru. Dale Steyn bowled the penultimate over and De Villiers spanked him for three sixes and a four, killing all SRH's hopes in a matter of minutes. ABD returned unconquered on 89 off 41 with the help of six fours and eight sixes as RCB got home with one ball to spare. During IPL 2012 as well, De Villiers had taken Steyn for 23 in an over. On that occasion, Steyn was representing Deccan Chargers.

4. 73 NOT OUT VS KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS – IPL 2020

Although De Villiers scored his runs at a breathtaking speed more often than not, he was by no means a flat-track bully. If anything, he was a genius of a different kind. One of his outstanding knocks came during the IPL 2020 edition against KKR in Sharjah. On a slow surface where batters from both sides, including Kohli, struggled to time the ball, De Villiers batted as if he was on a different pitch. He clobbered 73* in only 33 balls, clubbing five fours and six sixes. De Villiers lifted RCB to an impressive 194 for 2. KKR could only manage 112 for 9 in response as Bangalore won by 82 runs.

5. 63 VS ST KITTS AND NEVIS PATRIOTS – CPL 2016

Representing Barbados Tridents against St Kitts and Nevis Patriots in the Caribbean Premier League (CPL) 2016, De Villiers scored 63 in only 33 deliveries. It was an excellent knock as it came in a challenging chase of 163. The Tridents were in a spot of bother at 45 for 2, having lost Steven Taylor and Wayne Parnell cheaply. However, De Villiers took them home with yet another match-winning innings. The South African run machine hit five fours and three sixes and featured in a third-wicket stand of 63 with Shoaib Malik (54). Tridents were 144 for 3 after 17 overs. De Villiers slammed the first two deliveries of the 18th over for sixes to swing the match completely the way of the Tridents. The chasing side won by seven wickets with eight balls in hand.

6. 71 VS MELBOURNE STARS – BBL 2019/20

De Villiers was in brilliant form for Brisbane Heat vs Melbourne Stars in the 53rd match of the BBL 2019/20 season at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). Heat batted first and De Villiers, coming in at the number four position, whacked 71 in only 37 balls. De Villiers hit two fours and six sixes during his innings, which came at a strike rate of 191.89. The South African was batting on 13 off 16 before turning the heat on quite literally. He hit consecutive sixes off Clint Hinchliffe before pounding Glenn Maxwell and Dilbar Hussain as well. He was out on the last ball but Heat posted an impressive 186 for 5 and eased to victory by 71 runs.

7. 52 VS MULTAN SULTANS – PSL 2019

De Villiers made his mark in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) as well. Representing Lahore Qalandars during the 2019 edition, he blasted a blistering 52* off 29 to help the franchise chase down a target of 201. ABD was batting on 28 off 18 after 17 overs with Lahore Qalandars at 160 for 4. The South African then slapped Junaid Khan for two sixes in the 18th over. Another six came in the next over from Andre Russell as De Villiers raced to 50 in 26 balls. David Wiese (45* off 20) slammed a six off the last ball bowled by Dan Christian to seal a famous win for Lahore Qalandars.

IS HARDIK PANDYA THE NEW VINOD KAMBLI OF TEAM INDIA?

Looking at Pandya's injury woes and recent poor performances, it's safe to say that he could take a while to be the player he really is. To force his way back into the side could also be a long journey...

CT CONTRIBUTOR

Hardik Pandya's breaking into the white-ball squads of the Indian cricket team in 2016 was a new light in a search for a proper all-rounder. Not only Pandya could smash the ball out of the park, but his efforts with bowling and fielding meant he was here to stay for a long time. Some even likened Pandya to former Indian skipper Kapil Dev. Pandya not only flourished in Team India's scene, but was a consistent force in the Indian Premier League for Mumbai Indians.

That helped him as well in terms of shaping his game. Pandya found success with MI and was a consistent force. The hard-hitting all-rounder made it to India's Test side in 2017 and earned a name for himself often coming on as the fourth pacer overseas. He was a constant feature for the side until 2018.

However of late, Pandya has been struggling with issues on and off the field. A shoulder injury saw him miss a lot of cricket for India in recent times and he has also lost his ability to bowl at the moment and there's no clear timeline as to when he will resume his services with the ball. With him not bowling, it impacted MI in the IPL 2021 season and Team India as well in the ICC T20 World Cup 2021.

Post the T20 World Cup, Pandya was didn't feature in the recently concluded T20I series against New Zealand at home. Reports have also come in that he is well short of the fitness standards required and could miss the upcoming series against South Africa next month. He is set to spend time at the NCA and be part of a rehab to nurse his shoulder.

Looking at Pandya's injury woes and recent poor performances, it's safe to say that he could take a while to be the player he really is. To force his way back into the side could also be a long journey. This also brings us to the issues happening off the field. Pandya is rash and careless. He is often in the news for the wrong things.

Recently, Pandya returned from the UAE and had two watches worth Rs 5 crore get seized by airport customs. According to a report in ANI, Pandya's watches were seized because it didn't have a bill. However, Pandya took to social media and clarified the same, saying that he voluntarily declared the items that were

purchased lawfully. Earlier this month, Pandya along with Rajeev Shukla and Munaf Patel were accused by a woman of rape. Rehnuma Bhati, who is a close aide of don Dawood Ibrahim, had charged Pandya along with the others for sexual assault.

Back in 2019, Pandya got into trouble alongside KL Rahul for making sexist comments in popular television show Koffee With Karan. Pandya issued an apology after facing backlash and was also called back by BCCI, besides being provisionally suspended. Pandya had boasted about hooking up with several women besides making comments such as he used to see how they move in nightclubs when asked why he doesn't get to know their names. He also said talent used to work when both Rahul and himself fell for a particular woman.

SO WHY ARE WE HIGHLIGHTING PANDYA ALONGSIDE FORMER CRICKETER KAMBLI?

Vinod Kambli and Sachin Tendulkar broke into the scenes and while the former had to see his career get wiped out, the latter became a legend. Kambli saw a premature end to his promising career. It was a sad sight for a player who hit two double-centuries in his first five innings for India in Test cricket. Known as a rash and wild person, Kambli's personality did the trick against him. He also struggled to continue his form and that too played a part in him vanishing from the scenes. As his cricket career ended, Kambli was no short of controversies. Being called a bully by a foreign neighbour, to not playing bank loans, failing to clear dues in the society he lived, claiming Sachin ignored him several times to his wife slapping people in a mall, the issues gripped him always.

Pandya, who is a father now, needs to get his focus back. Besides improving his fitness, Pandya needs to play and work his way into the team. He also needs to be so careless and give a more responsible picture of himself off the field.■

UP, CLOSE & PERSONAL

“I LIKE TO EAT GNOCCHI”

— AARON FINCH

Name: Aaron Finch, **Born:** November 17, 1986, **Place of Birth:** Colac, Australia, **Playing Role:** Top-order batsman, **Playing Style:** Right-hand bat, **Bowling style :** Slow left-arm orthodox

Although Finch has been a dominating figure as an opener in the shorter formats, he has struggled to find his place in first-class cricket. For some time Finch had been an automatic selection in Australia's ODI and T20 teams. He recently smashed a world-record 172 runs off 76 balls against Zimbabwe, surpassing his own previous record of 156 runs which he hit against England five years ago.

First Love
Cricket

Nickname
Finchy

Hobbies & Interests
Cooking

Favorite Food
Gnocchi

Like to play against
England and India

Favorite Footballer
Lionel Messi

Favorite Shot
Pull shot

Favorite Cricketer
Mark Waugh

Favorite Cricket Ground
Melbourne Cricket Ground

Favorite Car
Mercedes Benz GLC

My Favourites

Favorite Movie
Me, Myself & Irene

Favorite Actress
Jennifer Aniston

Favorite Actor
Jim Carrey

Favorite Color
Blue

INSTA

A QUICK HELLO FROM A COOL CAT AT PRACTICE

BACK TO TEST CRICKET FOR INDIA

OH!! NO BUBBLE

GET OUT THERE AND LIVE A LITTLE

When you are looking for peace, nature is always the answer
—Suresh Raina

Loved the shot — Yuvraj Singh

Good to be back with the boys
— Umesh Yadav

Gearing up for the Test challenge
—Mayank Agarwal

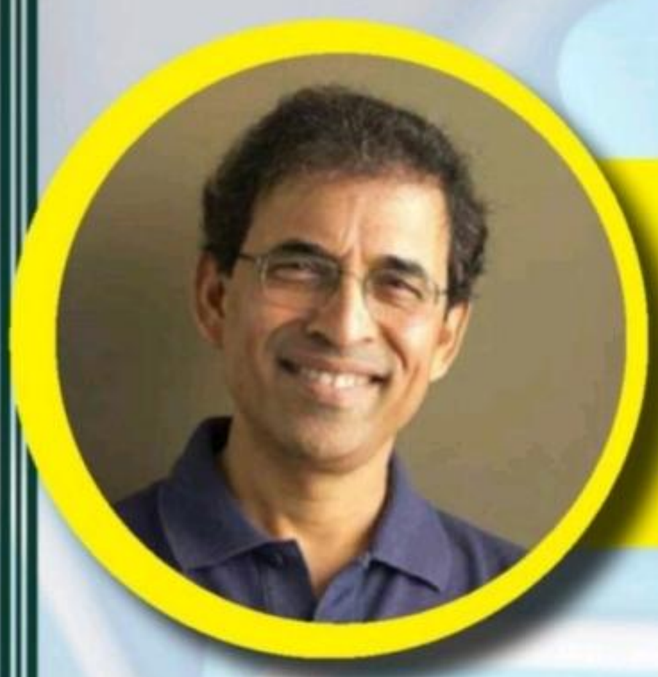
Tweets of the Week

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

@RickyPonting: "Very well deserved and only the beginning for you mate. Proud of you @ShreyasIyer15"

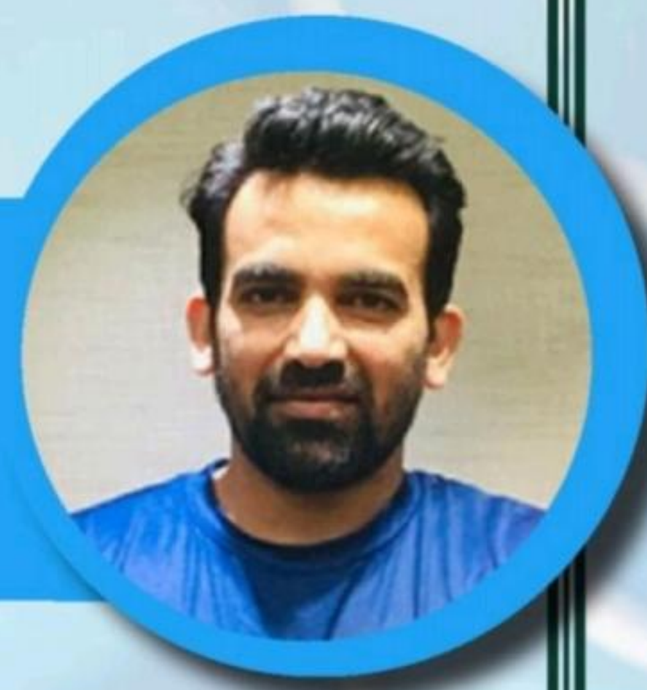
@JimmyNeesh: "Can somebody take a closer look at those coins please?"

@cricketaakash "If there's one thing you'd definitely want in a cricket pitch, it has to be the 'bounce"



@bhogleharsha "Feel for Suranga Lakmal. Quality bowler but hardly gets to bowl in home conditions"

@ImZaheer: Equally rare is Zaheer Khan outscoring @WasimJaffer14 in not one but both innings of a test match"



TRENDING

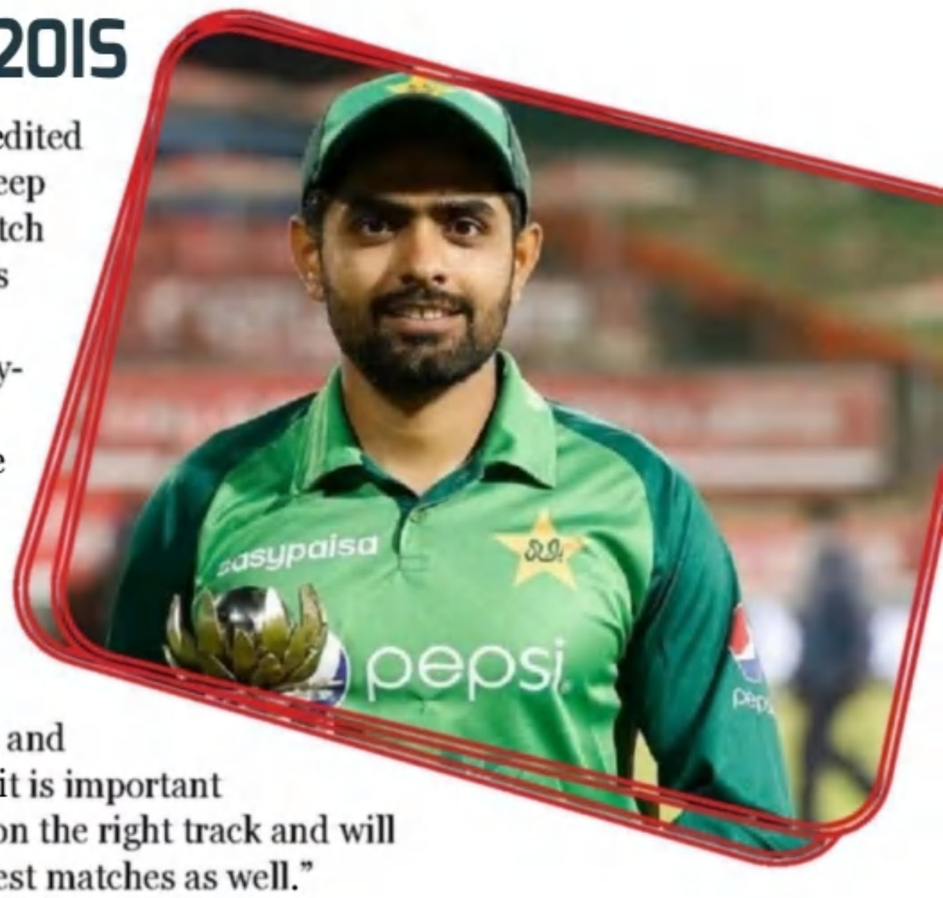
"Need to come up with different ways to counter spin"

Kane Williamson on Tests in India

BEST SKIPPER IN CRICKET

Team India is all set to take on New Zealand in a two-match Test series. The hosts will be without their regular skipper Virat Kohli in Kanpur. He is expected to join the team after the first Test match. Meanwhile, Salman Butt has picked the best captain out of Virat Kohli, Kane Williamson and Joe Root. When a fan on his channel asked him to name his pick, he took Kane Williamson's name. "I think Kane Williamson is the best captain. Yes, Joe Root and Virat Kohli are brilliant as well, and they have led their sides superbly, but overall, generically, Williamson is the man when you consider all leaders across formats," said Butt on his YouTube channel. Virat has led India in 65 Tests wherein India won on 38 occasions and lost in 16 matches. Kane Williamson has led New Zealand to win in 22 Tests while losing 8. Joe Root has a win percentage of 48.21 out of 56 games that he has led as a captain.

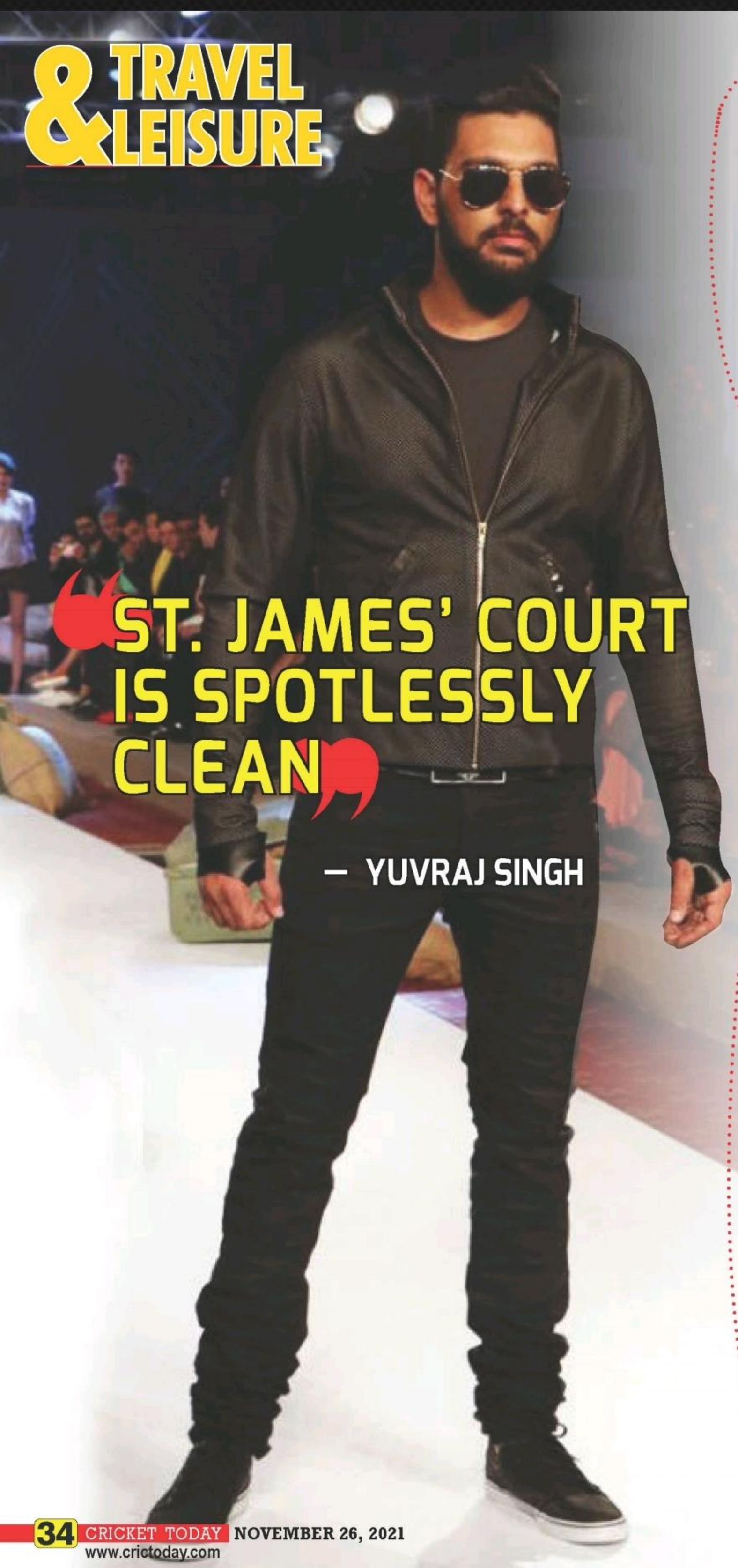
RARE FAILURE IN T20IS



Pakistan captain Babar Azam has credited his side's work ethics for their clean sweep against hosts Bangladesh in a three-match T20I series. Discussing about his team's performance after winning the final match, Babar mentioned how every player is aware of their role. Babar recently surpassed Mohmmad Hafeez to become Pakistan's leading run-scorer in T20Is. However, he scored just 27 from 3 matches. "Everyone expects me to do well. Unfortunately, that didn't happen this time. I always try to perform in every game, but there are always ups and downs in cricket. This teaches you that it is important to remain positive all the time. We are on the right track and will look to carry the same momentum in Test matches as well."

REPORT CARD OF ROHIT'S CAPTAINCY

Rohit Sharma won the first T20I series as Team India's full-time captain. India thumped New Zealand by a margin of 3-0. Rating his captaincy, former India cricketer Gautam Gambhir lauded the new skipper of the national team. Gambhir was particularly impressed with the way Rohit made his bowling changes in the third and final match of the series. "Very excellent leadership from Rohit Sharma. The introduction of Axar Patel for the third over and bringing on Yuzvendra Chahal on the 4th over. These are minor, tiny things that you could be unable to spot. However, this is what being a captain is all about: always being at the forefront of the game, and he was rewarded with the result."



"ST. JAMES' COURT IS SPOTLESSLY CLEAN"

— YUVRAJ SINGH

Favorite hotel in the world

St. James' Court, London.

USP of the hotel

The hotel retains the extraordinary service and hospitality that the chain is noted for in India. It is friendly and efficient without being obsequious. It is spotlessly clean, with large rooms.

Your last visit there and the occasion

I came here for some personal work in 2016.

Favorite destination in the world

Queenstown in New Zealand.

What is that you like about this place?

With a buzzing atmosphere and stunning scenery, you'll find there's no other place in the world quite like Queenstown.

Most memorable meal while travelling

I once had delicious Japanese food at ITC Maurya, Delhi.

What is the one thing you always pack before leaving for any destination?

Being a music freak, I keep my iPod.

FIND SIX DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THESE TWO PICTURES

CONTEST

Last month's winners: Ajay (Pune), Vidu (Dehradun), Avik (Delhi)

Last month's answers:

In this contest you have to spot six differences between both the pictures. Three lucky winners will get a Parker pen each.

Rules & Regulations for the contest

- **Last date for entries:** Dec 2, 2021.
- A draw will determine the winner.
- Winners name will be announced in the next issue of cricket today.
- The prizes may vary from the one shown.
- Send in your answers along with your name, occupation, address, contact No. and Email ID at our postal address.

Our postal address

Cricket Today: X-30, Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, New Delhi-110020 Ph: 011 40712100
Fax: 011 41611866

BEST OF THE WEEK

MOST TEST WICKETS FOR INDIA IN WON MATCHES

MOST TEST RUNS SCORED IN A DAY IN INDIA

INDIANS WITH MOST TEST M.O.M AWARDS AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

MOST RUNS AS INDIAN CAPTAIN AGAINST NEW ZEALAND IN TESTs

666: MANSUR PATAUDI
643: MOHD. AZHARUDDIN
599: MS DHONI
435: SACHIN TENDULKAR
404: VIRAT KOHLI

INDIAN CAPTAINS WITH MOST TEST WINS AGAINST NEW ZEALAND

5 - MAK PATAUDI
4 - MS DHONI
3 - VIRAT KOHLI

MOST RUNS IN IND v NZ TESTS

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2% FUEL ECONOMY*

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